

On Dec 10, the following SRRC staff attended the Tulane University Southern Institute's TIES Cross-Cultural Communication workshop, held in New Orleans from 8:30 am till 3:00pm. The workshop was underwritten, among others, primarily by The Steven Spielger Foundation:

Georgina Acosta, David Ambrogio, Deepak Bhatnagar, Danielle Roberts, Patricia Winston (Elena Graves was invited, but was unable to attend due to another meeting at SRRC).

The TIES (Teams for Inter-Ethnic Solutions) workshop was a six-hour interactive training session on cross-cultural communication. This was not a "diversity training" or "cultural sensitivity" workshop : instead. the TIES workshop taught cultural competence---
- practical skills that could help the participants understand and communicate more effectively with people from different cultures. The training defined culture as more than race, nationality, or ethnicity : it could be based on age, geogarphy, or even organizational life. The workshop was presented in a user-friendly style and provided practical excercises to point out techniques that could be used to improve general communication as well as cross-cultural communication.

Prof. Lance Hill, Director of the Southern Institute, and the trainer did an excellent job of meeting the objectives of the workshop in improving the participant's ability to (1) understand different cultural communication styles; (2) communicate effectively in multi-cultural environments; and (3) identify conflicts arising from, or compounded by, cultural differences.

The training very effectively combined techniques of lectures, role playing and small discussion groups to drive home the relevant points.

All attending from SRRC came away with a new appreciation of effective cross-cultural communication. I will share with MSAWDC members a training manual that covers all the fundamental concepts that were covered in the workshop. Enclosed are the comments from the other participants :

"I enjoyed the workshop and learned a good deal about cross-cultural communication. The workshop took a different approach to the subject from what I usually learn in similar courses. The focus was on particular factors and tools in communicating across any culture and did not focus on what to do with what particular culture. The workshop provided opportunities for plenty of hands- on exercises. The most impressive part of the day for me was learning the the CODE formula as a tool for analyzing verbal and nonverbal messages."

David

"The TIES workshop on multicultural communication was a very informative and positive workshop. Dr. Lance Hill had us practice many useful techniques that will not only help us with cross-cultural communication, but also with our everyday communication with each other. Dr. Hill gave definitions and lecture notes during the workshop. The workshop kept participants interested, by including role-playing and small group discussion. Dr. Hill provided us with several techniques to help us

understand different communication styles. He taught us to objectively look at a situation and observe what is going on before we make judgements. Overall I found the workshop very useful and would recommend it to anyone who is interested in improving his or her communication skills at home, work, church, school, etc."

Danielle Roberts

"My participation in the TIES (Teams for Inter-Ethnic Solutions) workshop was extremely enlightening. We participated in a Name Shield Exercise. The name shield was a symbolic chart representing an individual's life history, ethnic ancestry and values. We could only use pictures--no words. Each participant took a few minutes to draw a name shield and then discuss it with a small group. I was paired with an American black male and a Russian female. As we discussed our shields we found that we were more alike than different. With that thought in mind the instructor was able to introduce practical techniques for improving general as well as cross-cultural communication. I came away from the session with the feeling that I can better understand different communication styles that will invariably enable me to function more successfully in this multi-cultural society. It also increased my appreciation of individualized differences, as well as conceptualizing my place in the whole."

Patricia J. Winston